

WOMEN'S
HEALTH

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Travelling with HRT?

Here's how to keep it stress free and safe

JETTING off on holiday should be exciting and relaxing — but let's be real, traveling with your HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy) meds can add a layer of stress, especially when you're navigating the unknown in another country. But don't worry — with a little bit of planning and some practical tips, you can travel confidently.

First Things First: Do a Little Homework

Take a moment to check the rules for the country you're heading to. Medication rules can vary wildly from place to place.

Start with the UK Government's travel advice — it'll give you the latest info on

medicine regulations for your destination. Some meds that are no big deal in the UK (like HRT) might be controlled in other countries. And yes, while most HRT isn't considered controlled, testosterone is in the UK, so it's worth double-checking.

If your meds are considered controlled, you might need a personal export licence. It's not difficult to get — just make sure to apply at least 10 days before your trip.

Often people miss to tell their travel insurance provider about any prescribed meds, including HRT and antidepressants (which are often used for menopause symptoms). It might not affect your premium, but it's essential for proper coverage.

Pack smart

A little bit of preparation really can go a long way and save you heaps of worry while you're trying to enjoy your well-earned break.

If you've just started HRT or recently adjusted your dose, your cycle might be a bit unpredictable — so be sure to pack some period products and pain relief, especially if you're prone to cramps. If the timing doesn't feel right, and you're worried it could interfere with your plans, it might even be worth delaying any new treatments until after your holiday. Your peace of mind matters too.

When it comes to airport security, this can stir up a bit of anxiety for most of us. Be

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sure to pack your prescription or a doctor's letter and stick to original packaging and labels — it can save a ton of stress.

Most HRT are under 100ml so can be taken in hand luggage. But don't just bring the bare minimum — pack extra in case of delays, spillages, or the ever-dreaded lost luggage moment, and, splitting your meds between your carry-on and your checked bag. Better safe than sorry.

Planning a long journey

If crossing time zones, this can mess up your medication schedule. Stay on track by setting up your phone in advance with alarms or a medication reminder app.

If you've got a long-haul flight, there may be a bit more to think about. Some tablet forms of HRT slightly increase your risk of blood clots, and flying can too. So be sure to stay hydrated, move around regularly, and limit alcohol.

If you're concerned, it might be worth chatting with your GP before travelling, about switching to a transdermal option (like patches, sprays or gels), which typically carry less risk.

Looking After Your HRT Abroad

Heat and humidity don't always mix well

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with medication and correct storage can be crucial to keeping your HRT safe. It's important you double-check the patient information leaflet that came with your HRT for any temperature requirements but here are my general tips:

Store gels, sprays, and patches below 25°C. If your hotel room isn't air-conditioned, packing a mini cool bag, insulated pouch, or thermos can be a lifesaver. Keeping tablets, capsules and patches in their blister packs and original cartons keeps moisture out. If you use sachets (like Testogel), snip off a tiny corner and clip it shut between uses to stop it drying out.

Sun, water, and products like sun cream can affect how well transdermal HRT works — especially if it hasn't had time to fully absorb. To get the best results, apply HRT with plenty of time before swimming or going out in the sun.

Lost Your HRT? Don't Panic

Despite our best efforts, sometimes things go sideways. If your HRT goes missing, don't be tempted to buy replacements over the counter abroad unless you've confirmed it's from a reliable pharmacy. Counterfeit meds are sadly common in some areas, and the ingredients may not match what you're used to. Instead, try natural support strategies: stay cool, drink plenty of water, and boost wellbeing with meditation, exercise, and a balanced diet — like the Mediterranean diet.

Researching local pharmacies before your trip can save stress later if you need help in a hurry.

My take home message

Traveling with HRT doesn't have to be a hassle. With a little bit of prep, you can relax and enjoy your holiday knowing that your health needs are taken care of. Safe travels and happy holidays—you've got this!

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